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THE ROLLING STONES

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CHAPTER ONE

PEBBLES

The Rolling Stones were seen as a menacing, moody, scruffy, long-haired bunch of blues-playing teenagers with none of the cuteness and humour of the Beatles; and in the Swinging Sixties, the Stones proved to be the very antithesis of the apparently innocent pop scene. Tales of drugs, debauchery and scandal mirrored their every move. Instead of being invited to the Palace to receive MBE medals from the Queen, they found themselves the focal point of Scotland Yard's drug squad. When their founding light Brian Jones was found dead at the bottom of his Sussex swimming pool, the collective cry of 'told you so' echoed throughout the media.

Yet the world was slowly opening its eyes to the realisation that even pop music had a deeper meaning and could actually provide a

backdrop to demonstrations and political movements. Pop music, such as that being performed by Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones could be subversive, dangerous, openly challenging and directly confrontational. At the very forefront of this wave of social change were the Rolling Stones. Realising that these five anti-order, potentially powerful but incredibly poor role models would not fade away, alarm bells rang throughout the establishment. As incredible as it seems today, the Stones actually shook the very foundations of sixties England and it wasn't long before their influence spread across the Atlantic and far beyond, to a world that watched, stunned by their influence. The self-appointed satanic majesties singing of 'sympathy for the Devil' were seen as threatening to the whole fabric of society itself. Music would never be the same again.

Lewis Brian Hopkins Jones was born in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire on 28 February 1942, into a respectable family where music was very much an important factor. His mother taught music and played the piano, and his father led the local choir and played keyboard. The young Brian was soft-spoken and well-educated, achieving good grades in literature, maths and physics, and finally leaving school with a total of nine O-level passes in the days when this was an impressive achievement. Inheriting his mother's interest in music, Brian learned to play saxophone, clarinet and piano, and by the time he was fourteen, he was already playing sax in a local band. His groups included The Cheltone Six, the Ramrods and The Bill Nile Jazz Band, all inspired by jazz legend Charlie Parker. In fact, it was jazz that originally inspired Brian's musical desire, and he would spend hours listening to and exchanging records with his friends. He learned how to read musical scores, and on his seventeenth birthday his parents bought him a Spanish acoustic guitar. When Brian heard Champion Jack Dupree's record *Blues from the Gutter* released in 1958, it changed his life. Playing guitar on that album was Larry Dale, and his style led the young musician down a whole new musical avenue.

Scandal and Brian Jones went hand in hand even at this early stage. In rural Britain, where teenage pregnancy was often hidden for fear of ostracisation, Brian managed to get three different girls into that condition. Valerie, an early teenage girlfriend fell pregnant and the child was later adopted. Pregnancy number two was a woman of twenty-three that he met at a Guildford concert, and when the sixteen-year-old Pat Andrews found herself to be expecting, the resulting son Julian was named after jazz musician Julian Adderley. Brian was only nineteen years of age and had already fathered three illegitimate children, but this was not enough to slow him down. When he went to see real-life blues legend Sonny Boy Williamson perform, it confirmed the direction that he knew he must take. It was London-based bluesman Alexis Korner that provided the opening for him, so Brian moved to the city and embarked on a music career that went on to produce the Rolling Stones. By now, Brian was one of the leading lights on slide guitar, after spending an intensive and determined few weeks literally locked away with his guitar perfecting his technique.

Meanwhile, two other young men, Michael Philip Jagger (born 26 July 1943), and Keith Richards (born 18 December 1943), were in Dartford, Kent. Keith Richards' interest in music can possibly be traced back through his paternal grandfather, who played in a successful jazz and blues based big band, and Keith developed a passion for this music, particularly the sound of the blues flooding over the Atlantic from the United States. Michael Jagger lived, for a while, in the same street as Keith, but in 1954, the Jaggers moved house to what was considered to be a better part of Dartford, Denver Road, and Mick started at the local grammar school. By the time Mick had moved onto the London School of Economics and Keith to Art College, both had developed a passion for American Blues. When the young Keith spotted Mick standing on a platform at Dartford Railway Station with an album under his arm, Keith casually informed Mick that he could play blues guitar. At that time,

Mick was in a band called Little Boy Blue and the Blue Boys and Keith was welcomed in to the band almost immediately.

Brian Jones's was now a member of Blues Incorporated playing alongside Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies – a band that would soon include future Stones member Charlie Watts. Charles Watts was born on 2 June 1941, and heralded from the North London suburb of Wembley. He loved Jazz and began playing the drums at fourteen. He was later spotted by Korner playing in The Troubadour jazz club in London and was invited to join Blues Incorporated.

Having finished his studies in graphic design, Charlie worked creating posters, but by night he trawled the vinyl stores in search of the latest releases from his idol, Charlie Parker. Initially, Charlie Watts declined Korner's approaches and briefly went on a tour of Denmark with fellow jazz musician Don Byas, but by January of 1962, he had joined forces with Blues Incorporated. On 17 March 1962, the band played at The Ealing Club, a venue hired by Alexis Korner, and Brian Jones decided to attend. The band playing at The Ealing Club that night consisted of Korner, Davies, Charlie Watts, Dick Heckstall-Smith, Long John Baldry and Ron Wood's brother Art. For the second gig the following Saturday, Korner invited the young slide guitarist, introduced as Elmo Jones, to join them and play some bottleneck blues on their version of Robert Johnson's *Dust My Broom*. Having read about the opening of The Ealing Club the previous Saturday, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards travelled to West London and were at the club for the second performance. Amazed by the soft-spoken, blonde slide guitarist, Mick, Keith and fellow Blue Boy Dick Taylor later got together with Brian Jones and began jamming. They even shared a flat together in Chelsea, West London and spent their time practicing and listening to each other's extensive record collections.

The drum stool, throughout that time, was filled by various occupants including Tony Chapman and Mick Avory (later of the Kinks), before Charlie Watts was invited along and agreed to sit in

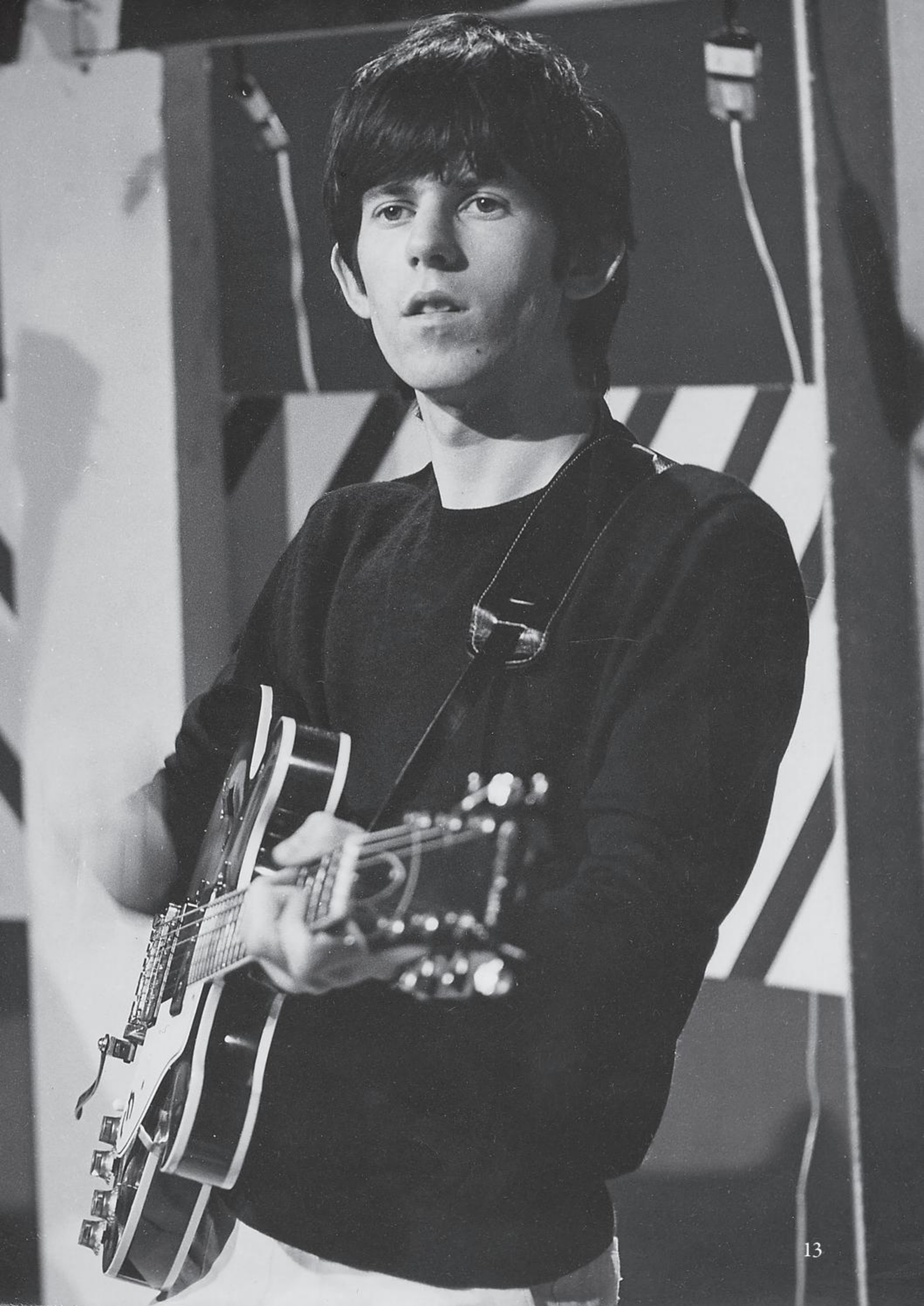
as an experiment. On keyboards was a man who was destined to become the 'hidden Stone' close friend Ian Stewart, who had also played with John Mayall. Very often forgotten and overlooked by the publicity machine, it was Stewart who provided a behind-the-scenes musical influence to the band by remaining loyal to his beliefs in the blues and his preferred boogie-woogie style of piano. Many years later, he watched from an almost detached position as fame destroyed Brian Jones and drugs took hold of the rest of the band. He even refused to play on Stones tracks that he felt were taking the band away from the blues style and on these occasions, his place would be filled by the likes of Nicky Hopkins, Billy Preston and ex-Small Faces keyboardist Ian McLagan, a long-time friend of Ron Wood. When Ian Stewart died in December 1985, the band was quick to pay tribute to him and included a piano solo of his as the fade-out on their album *Dirty Work*.

Born in Fife, Scotland in 1938, Ian was older than Brian, Mick, Keith and Charlie. When the Stones were on the verge of stardom, he found himself side-lined by manager Andrew Loog Oldham as his 'normal' appearance didn't fit the band's developing image. One more piece of the jigsaw was needed before the newly named Rollin' Stones (the 'g' being a later addition) could take off. Semi-professional bass guitarist William Perks, also known as Bill Wyman, was working as a shopkeeper in Streatham, South London. Born 24 October 1936, he was busy earning a growing reputation as a session player when he answered an advert for a band audition. His initial reaction was to turn it down, but he changed his mind when he heard that Charlie Watts was to become the drummer, and so he joined the band in December 1962. By 3 January 1963, they were playing the famed Marquee Club in London. The line up of Jones, Jagger, Richards, Wyman, Watts and Stewart would take the Stones from near obscurity to worldwide fame in a remarkably short period of time. The last addition to the crew occurred when a young, part Dutch, part American, but very British public school educated

Andrew Oldham saw the Stones play a gig in Richmond in South West London in April 1963. He was only nineteen years old, but he quickly became the Stones' manager, taking them on the road and within a year the band had secured a record deal. Adding the 'g' to Rolling, removing the s from Richards, and ejecting Ian Stewart from the band's publicity shots were only the more visible changes Oldham made to the band. His influence, flamboyance, inspiration and infectious belief in his own ability, and that of the Stones, took them to a previously unimaginable level of stardom.

Andrew Oldham moved in all the right circles and when he met John Lennon and Paul McCartney, he talked them into giving the Stones their recently written song *I Wanna Be Your Man*, which went on to become one of the Stones' early hits. Oldham's admiration for the Beatles model of success also resulted in him encouraging his new band to try writing their own material. He quickly recognized that he could develop the scruffy collection of musicians to occupy a position as counterparts to the cuddly Beatles. He became one of the most recognizable and prominent characters of the sixties scene and added to the Stones' legend through his own dubious lifestyle, bad press and an almost gangster-like persona that eventually saw him fall into serious drug addiction, and resulted in him selling the Stones to American Allen Klein in 1966. His influence on the whole Rolling Stones phenomena can never be forgotten, and even now, some forty years after they parted company, both Mick Jagger and Keith Richards still readily acknowledge the huge debt they owe to him. All the parts of this band had finally come together, and the incredible Rolling Stones, had been born.

When Beatle George Harrison saw the Stones play live in London he immediately recommended them to Decca. These were heady days for the Stones and they soon found themselves touring the country with the likes of American legends Bo Diddley, the Everly Brothers and Little Richard. This tour proved to be a defining moment for the fledgling band, and their popularity grew with hordes of



screaming girls drowning out most of the sound from their modest amplification system. The Stones set consisted of cover versions of rhythm and blues songs, but the tour also saw a shift towards a more mainstream style and cemented their newfound pop icon status. A few months before the tour, and with remarkable speed, The Rolling Stones had released their first single *Come On*, a Chuck Berry cover that was a prominent feature of their live set. Released on 7 June 1963, it had been recorded a month earlier at the Olympic Studios in London and was backed by another cover – this time Willie Dixon's *I Want to Be Loved*, the single charted modestly and launched the band's battle with the Beatles for chart dominance.

The band's natural leader had, up until this point, been Brian Jones. Not only was he the founding force behind the Stones, he was arguably the most knowledgeable on the blues music that they were trying to emulate. However, the dynamism and stage antics of its main focal point, lead singer Mick Jagger, would mean that Brian's position as leader was destined to quickly decline. Suddenly it was Mick who got the attention and was approached as 'spokesman' for the Stones. Quite simply, no one had seen anything like him before, certainly not on this side of the Atlantic. Mick had learned from his heroes, in particular Little Richard, who taught him about showmanship, and Jagger presented an almost demonically charged stage act that made the Beatles look like something out of a church fete. The shock worked superbly on a music-buying public, now almost divided in two. You were either a Beatles fan or you followed the rhythm and blues movement with the Stones. Steamrolling a path that opened doors for The Who, and other similar bands, it was the Stones who led the way and refused to be labelled under the pop banner.

In November 1963, Oldham released the Stones second single – the Lennon and McCartney penned *I Wanna Be Your Man*. The song propelled the Stones to No. 12 in the UK chart, where it stayed in and around that position for an incredible four months. Yet it

was the group's third single that proved to be the turning point in the Stones chart success. *Not Fade Away*, written by Norman Petty and Buddy Holly, was released in February 1964, and soared to No. 3 in the UK charts and once again remained there for nearly four months. This also proved to be the Stones' first real breakthrough into the US charts as well, proof that word of this uncouth band from London was quickly spreading far and wide. As a result, Oldham took his band to New York for a brief visit, and while there, he further enhanced their image by unbridling them on television for various interviews and live appearances. This taste of stardom finally convinced Mick to write to the London School of Economics and quit his studies, committing fully to the rock and roll lifestyle.

Anxious to capitalise on the success of *Not Fade Away*, an album was released. Called simply *The Rolling Stones*, it was unleashed on 16 April 1964, and shot straight to No. 1 then stayed in the UK album charts for a year. When released in America, the albums preceding 1967's *Their Satanic Majesties Request* were all slightly different from their UK counterparts with changes to track lists, different names and alternative artwork. *The Rolling Stones* was released in the States under the banner of *England's Newest Hitmakers* and contained cover versions delivered with a rough and edgy live feel that underlined the excitement felt at a Stones concert.

When the Stones went to the States in June 1964, they headlined at Carnegie Hall and the next single, Womack & Womack's *It's All Over Now* reached No. 1 on 8 July 1964, in both the UK and the US. The Stones had cracked the American market to such an extent that many predicted that they would soon be bigger than the Beatles in America, and when they arrived at New York Kennedy Airport on 1 June 1964, over five thousand screaming fans met them.

By the time they returned to the UK, causing a near riot at the airport as they did so, the Stones were busy further enhancing their status by releasing a number of singles that confirmed their rise to the very top in the UK and the US. On 24 July 1964, thirty people,

including two policemen, were crushed in a near stampede when seven thousand fans tried to storm the stage at the seaside town of Blackpool. The following week, a concert in Northern Ireland had to be abandoned after only a quarter of an hour because the ambulance teams couldn't cope with the amount of fainting and hysterical girls, some of which had to be led away in straitjackets. On 6 August, the band appeared on the popular television show *Ready Steady Go!* to rave reviews.

The run of singles started that month with the release of the first Jagger / Richards composition *Tell Me*, a song complete with a catchy jingly guitar solo. This was followed in September by *Time Is On My Side*, which was another massive hit, albeit another cover. In October, the Stones went back to the States for a second tour during which they appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in front of a massive audience. The show's host stated afterwards that he had been 'shocked' by their behaviour. Further excellent publicity followed for Oldham and the Stones when the band was banned from appearing on live Belgian television after fans rioted at Brussels Airport and then again at a concert in Paris.

In November, the Stones released the hugely successful cover of Willie Dixon's *Little Red Rooster* that duly shot to No. 1, staying in the charts for three months. This was very quickly followed by the December release of Richards and Jagger's *Heart of Stone* before the second album, *Number Two* came out on 15 January 1965. Within a week *Number Two* had become No. 1 in the UK, and stayed in that position for thirty-seven weeks. At the end of January, the band made their first appearance in Australia where they were welcomed by three thousand music-hungry fans before playing nine sell-out concerts and moving on to take New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore by storm. On 26 February 1965, they released *The Last Time* as a single in the UK, where it went to the top of the charts once again and remained there for nearly a month. In March, just as the Beatles were being nominated for MBEs, the Rolling Stones' Mick, Brian and Bill

were all arrested, having been caught urinating on a garage forecourt in Romford, Essex. April didn't pass without incident either, when the Stones were turned off half way through a concert in Ontario for being too loud and the audience being too excited.

Never one to miss the chance of expanding his already huge viewing figures, Ed Sullivan took a deep breath and invited the Stones back onto his show for a second appearance on 2 May 1965. To keep their, now rabid, fans happy for the summer, the band released an extended play *Got Live If You Want It* featuring all the favourites from their well-honed stage act. The full-on hysteria of the screaming girls is captured totally as the band members are introduced before kicking into *Under My Thumb* and the tension created on the album is only temporarily relieved when Mick opens *Lady Jane*. It remains a timepiece of the mid-sixties and lives on as a reminder of just how powerful the Stones were and, of course, still are.

When *I Can't Get No (Satisfaction)* was released in the UK in August 1965, having appeared earlier in the States, it took the world by storm, going to No. 1, and cementing the reputation of the song-writing partnership that was Jagger and Richards. The Stones immediately followed that up with the September release of the single version of *Get Off of My Cloud* another No. 1 smash hit. In September, another riot ensued, this time in West Berlin where the over-eager Germans ripped up dozens of seats to throw at riot police, four of whom ended up in hospital along with more than thirty fans. This coincided with the release of the third album, the increasingly-aptly titled *Out of Our Heads*. This was an album that, despite its mid-sixties feel, really set the scene surrounding the Stones and everything that they would ultimately become.

Out of Our Heads sold well and went to No. 2 in the UK album charts and No. 1 in the States. As 1965 came to a close, it took with it a more innocent age in music, and as the new year arrived, the times really were a-changing. The Stones released the single *19th Nervous*

Breakdown, rumoured to have been written about Mick's live-in girlfriend at the time, Chrissie Shrimpton. The song was a No. 2 hit, backed by *As Tears Go By*. The relentless touring continued unabated with trips to Australia, America and New Zealand in the early part of 1966. When the compilation album *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)* was released in March, it did little to satisfy the massive fan-base and a new studio album followed the next month with the remarkable *Aftermath*. Many of the tracks for this latest album had been recorded in Los Angeles earlier that year during a break in the tour cycle. The patchy album includes *Going Home*, a track that rambles on for a full eleven minutes, and the Stones' next single *Paint It Black*. Going straight to No. 1, the album stayed at the top of the chart for seven weeks, and *Paint It Black* was equally successful, charting at No. 1 in May.

Unfortunately by the summer of 1966 the pressures of rock stardom were getting to the Stones. Mick Jagger suffered from a bout of nervous exhaustion in mid-June, and was later involved in a serious road accident in Marylebone from which both he and girlfriend Chrissie Shrimpton luckily escaped unhurt. In September, *Have You Seen Your Mother Baby Standing in the Shadows* arrived and sold well, reaching No. 5. But the chart position was seen as a bit of a disappointment, and the year ended in near-tragic circumstances when Chrissie attempted suicide, as her relationship with Mick ended when he openly went out with the teenage Marianne Faithfull. 1967 opened with the Stones releasing the then controversially titled *Let's Spend the Night Together* together with *Ruby Tuesday* as a double A-sided single. This was followed by another studio album *Between the Buttons*, which became the first Stones album to contain only Jagger and Richards compositions. It was the cover, however, that spoke volumes. Brian appears in the centre of the group, still attempting to convey some sense of leadership but looks distant, drugged and worryingly vulnerable. It was a sad sign of what was to come.

15 February 1967 was the day that the path to Brian's ultimate destruction began. The drugs squad wielding a warrant issued under the drugs act raided Keith's Sussex spread Redlands. The raid followed a newspaper report that Mick had taken acid (LSD) and regularly smoked cannabis. He began legal proceedings against the paper, but police burst into Keith's mansion and arrested both stars. The publicity was hostile and threatened to blow the offences, in Keith's case for allowing his premises to be used and in Mick's for drug possession, out of all proportion as calls to make them an example sounded throughout the land. It was a dangerous situation as the two became aware that they could be facing jail sentences. Marianne was also caught up in the furore when it was reported that, at the time of the raid, she had been naked and had wrapped a rug around herself as police searched for drugs. To escape the pressure surrounding them, the band took off for a break in Morocco. But this trip ended badly when Brian very publicly broke up with his girlfriend of two years Anita Pallenberg; after reports were circulated of his increasing drug-and alcohol-induced violence towards her. Anita then started a very public relationship with Keith. The Stones party, who simply flew back from Tangier without him, abandoned the increasingly unpredictable Brian in Morocco. His position within the band was now hanging by a thread, as was his mental state. He was no longer leader of the band and as that realisation began to dawn, Brian turned more and more to drugs to help him cope, leading to his rapid and dramatic decline.

By this time the tension within the band was at breaking point. Whilst Mick and Keith awaited their fate, Brian's flat in West London was raided and he too was arrested for drug offences. As the Stones went off across Europe on tour they were systematically stopped and subjected to intimate body searches as they were targeted for possible drug offences. On 15 June 1967, Mick and Keith appeared on the live satellite recording of the Beatles *All You Need Is Love*. Despite the good vibes of the event they were no doubt

extremely worried about the outcome of their case. When the verdict was finally heard in Chichester, Sussex, both Mick and Keith were sent to prison. Even High Court Judges, not renowned for their love of the Rolling Stones, joined in the outcry surrounding the heavy sentences. One went as far as to say that had the two been anyone else they would never have received custodial sentences. Even the ultra conservative *The Times* newspaper agreed, and if the establishment was keen to make examples of Mick and Keith, all they managed to do was to help turn them into fully blown rock gods. After a brief stay in prison, the pair were released on bail as the appeal process started. Following an anxious wait, the sentences were finally overturned and the Stones reacted by releasing a tongue in cheek single *We Love You*.

As Mick and Keith received the good news, Brian was undergoing hospital treatment for nervous exhaustion. In a bid to get away from the craziness of London, Mick and Marianne travelled to North Wales to join the Beatles at the Maharishi Marhesh Yogi's seminar to relax. In September, the Stones parted company with Andrew Loog Oldham, an event overshadowed somewhat when Brian received a nine-month jail sentence for possession of drugs following his earlier raid.

Once again there was an outcry, and after serving a night in Wormwood Scubs Brian was released and given a three-month suspended sentence instead. During the legal process much was made of his increasingly worrying mental state. Certainly as far as the Stones were concerned, Brian found himself very much on the outside. Released on 8 December 1967, the latest Stones album arrived amongst a gasp of surprise. *Their Satanic Majesties Request* represented a total mood change as the Stones attempted to go psychedelic. Perhaps inspired by the trip to Wales to see the Maharishi or by the Beatles' *Sgt. Peppers*, the Stones had produced a tame and uncharacteristic album that left many fans somewhat bemused. Only tracks such as *Citadel* hit the mark. By Christmas

1967, the album had peaked at No. 3 but Brian had once again been rushed to hospital suffering from nervous exhaustion brought on by a massive intake of drugs and drink.

1968 saw the Stones go back into the Olympic Studio to start recording what would become a defining Stones album *Beggars Banquet*. In May, Brian was again arrested for possession at his home in London, and staring a jail sentence firmly in the face, he began legal moves denying the charge. On the 25 May, the Stones released the monumental *Jumpin' Jack Flash* that they followed a month later in the States with *Street Fighting Man*. It was the start of a golden age for the Stones as they began morphing into the greatest rock-and-roll act in the world, but before that could happen a tragedy with a sense of disturbing inevitability would occur.

As Brian's position became untenable, the Stones made little secret of pursuing his replacement. Cream's legendary Eric Clapton was mooted along with others, as Brian desperately tried to hold onto the band he had created. When *Beggars Banquet* was initially released in August that year, it was surrounded by controversy and the cover was banned from several points of sale for including a picture of a toilet. Eventually, a new tongue-in-cheek cover was used that instead showed an invite to a party. Suddenly the Stones were on fire and the album's opener *Sympathy for the Devil* made the immediate future quite clear. As Mick went to work on the film *Performance*, *Street Fighting Man* was banned in Chicago after it was blamed for inspiring student riots. During this time, the Stones were captured in the overtly political and mind-numbingly confusing statement film *One Plus One* later called *Sympathy for the Devil* by the controversial writer and director Jean-Luc Godard. The film is a political journey through scenes surrounding contemporary issues such as racism, black power and abortion. It remains the definition of confusion but makes a fascinating historical document and captures a rare glimpse of the Stones at work. The isolation of Brian is clearly seen and illustrated by Godard who films him alone in a screened-off cubicle

taking no real part in the development of the song, save an early section when he is seen working on chords with Mick who was also on acoustic guitar. After a while it becomes tragically apparent that his guitar isn't even turned up. The end for Brian was painfully close now, and the continued presence of his ex-love Anita Pallenberg, who was now with Keith, must have further emphasised his vulnerability and alienation.

Mick's film *Performance* was to be another cause for tension in the band. Written and co-directed by Donald Cammell, it starred Mick, Keith's partner Anita, and actors James Fox and Michele Breton. Following the life of a reclusive rock star, *Performance* contained graphic scenes of real sex between Jagger and Pallenberg, which almost broke the Stones apart when a distraught Keith found out. The film was disappointingly received, but has since become a cult classic. On 6 September 1968, a much-relieved Brian received a fine for possession of cannabis and set about buying Cotchford Farm in Sussex. No doubt he felt the need to escape the madness of living in London, and when he saw the farm he fell for it straight away.

When the new edition of *Beggars Banquet* with the toned-down cover was finally released on 5 December 1968, it represented a milestone not only for the Stones but also for music in general. Tracks such as *Parachute Woman*, *Sympathy for the Devil* and *Street Fighting Man* elevated the band to an almost mythical status. The album contained what was Brian's last real contribution to the band, with his simmering yet smooth slide guitar on *No Expectations*. Plans were, by now, well developed for the Stones' performance of a one-off television special to follow the Beatle film *Magical Mystery Tour* of the previous year. The idea was for a rock-and-roll circus, where the Stones would perform with guests in front of an invited audience. On 6 December 1968, the Stones started rehearsals with The Who at the Marquee, where it all began a few years earlier. By this time, the Stones were rusty to say the least, but once up on stage it didn't take long for their talent to shine through. The film was finally

put together over a period of three hectic days at Wembley's Inter Tel studios. The set was a circus tent with Mick taking the role as Ringmaster. Among the guests invited to perform were Eric Clapton, John and Yoko Lennon, Taj Mahal, Jethro Tull, Marianne Faithfull, Doctor John and The Who. The bands performed over a mammoth and disorganised eighteen-hour session that started at midday on 11 December 1968, and lasted well into the next morning. Lighting, sound and getting the right acts up onto the stage in a functioning condition proved difficult and the shooting overran horribly. Filled by an irrational fear that they had been blown off their own stage by The Who, the film was sadly shelved by the Stones. In hindsight, it is a stunning performance by the Stones just as they were reaching their peak.

In January 1969, Brian was banned from a Sri Lankan hotel when they mistook the troubled star for a vagrant. Temporarily gone were his flamboyant image, and penchant for wearing the brightest, silkiest and most stylish clothes, having been replaced by a shambling drug-dulled shadow. When the band went back into the Olympic Studio to start work on another album, the magnificent *Let It Bleed*, Brian's absence was more apparent than ever. He turned up to lay down some Moroccan drums for the track *Midnight Ramble* but he could barely function on any other creative level and his contributions and attendance were limited. Keith, meanwhile, was openly doing heroin with Anita Pallenberg, and the effects were obvious as both frequently turned up looking worryingly ill. Mick and Keith had written many of the songs for the album during a stay in Italy, yet the relationship between the two was still strained, to say the least, following Jagger's monumentally public betrayal of Richards during the filming of *Performance*.

It was not long before Mick and Marianne Faithfull were both arrested following another raid at his Chelsea home. They were released on bail and began a fresh of worry over the possible outcome of the charges. A week later, the Stones were again in the headlines

when Keith crashed his car near his home in Sussex, although fortunately his passenger, the then-pregnant Pallenberg, only suffered a broken collarbone. Being in and around the Stones was having an alarming effect on the health of Marianne Faithfull as well, as her addiction to heroin and cocaine really began to take hold. Both she and Anita's looks were suffering badly, but not to the extent that Keith's appearance had begun to deteriorate, and it was clear that the lifestyle was taking a grievous toll on all concerned. Brian's health was in an alarming decline and when his parents visited him at Cotchford Farm in May they found him depressed and still aching for Pallenberg despite the new woman in his life Anna Wohlin.

On 9 June 1969, Brian Jones's career with the Stones was finally over when he was asked to leave the band. The night before, Mick had been to see Blind Faith play a concert in Hyde Park and had hatched the idea for a free Stones event later in the year. They had already decided to replace Brian with Mick Taylor (ex-member of John Mayall's Bluesbreakers) and had even made their approach. Mick, Keith and Charlie drove down to Cotchford Farm to see Brian. They told him that his lack of input during the album sessions showed that he was not up to touring with the band and that he was effectively fired. On the face of it Brian took the news well but he was clearly high on drugs. He had already been in discussions with Mitch Mitchell and Alexis Korner about forming his own band and had long been expecting the Stones saga to end. He did not seem surprised and accepted Mick and Keith's financial pay off without negotiation. The band went back to Olympic Studios, and Brian sat at home and drank himself into a more comfortable oblivion. Charlie Watts and his wife Shirley visited Brian several times over the next few weeks. They lived nearby and were genuinely concerned about their old friend. They reported that he appeared in good spirits and looking healthier than he had for a while, and even invited him to the Stones free concert in Hyde Park, the arrangements for which were now well underway. He declined and remained at

home, overseeing some sporadic building work being undertaken by a man named Frank Thorogood, who, years later was reported to have made a death bed confession to the murder of Brian. Whatever happened on the night of 2 July 1969 may never be fully understood but Brian's body was pulled from the bottom of his pool where he had been for some time. There have been many stories from all of the key witnesses, but one puzzling fact remains unanswered. How did Brian, an expert and strong swimmer, drown in his own pool? It is of course possible that he had taken his usual combination of downers and alcohol and had simply gone for a swim to cool off on a hot summer night, then accidentally drowned. Needless to say, conspiracy theories abound. It was Ian Stewart who answered the phone at Olympic Studios at three in the morning where the Stones were still busy mixing the album. They went into collective shock and tears were shed. Despite the difficult circumstances, Mick and Keith decided that the Hyde Park concert should still go ahead. It would be the occasion when Mick Taylor would be introduced to the world as the new Stones guitarist, but the planned happy event simmered into a very public wake for poor Brian Jones. The next phase in the history of the Stones was underway.

CHAPTER TWO
ROCKS

Michael Kevin Taylor was twenty when he got the call from Mick Jagger. Born on 17 January 1949 in Hertfordshire, he had forged a growing reputation playing guitar with the legendary, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, and had just started out on a solo career. Despite being visibly younger than the Stones (Bill Wyman was ten years his senior), and looking more innocent than either Keith or his predecessor Brian Jones, his guitar playing blended perfectly with the music the band was now producing. His blonde hair echoed a younger Brian, but there the similarity ended. Taylor had first seen the Stones while still at school back in 1963, and when Jagger invited him along to Olympic where the band was recording *Let It Bleed* he jumped at the chance. When he got to the studio he played on early attempts at newly

written tracks such *Honky Tonk Women*. The formal offer finally came and after a few days considering it, Taylor became a Rolling Stone.

He proved the perfect partner for Keith and opened up new avenues for the Stones to explore. This resulted in a golden age for the band and some of the best live rock guitar duos ever witnessed. First though, was the little matter of making his debut in front of three-hundred-thousand Stones fans on the bank of The Serpentine in Hyde Park. Saturday 5 July 1969 had been planned for a while, and the set list of prog rockers King Crimson, Alexis Korner and Family had been formalised. Security was provided by a collection of London bikers, following reports of how well the Hell Angels of San Francisco had kept order at recent huge outdoor events for bands such as The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane. The band met up at The Londonderry House Hotel on Park Lane, right next to the venue, and discussed the set list. There had been hardly any time at all to rehearse, and a visibly terrified Mick Taylor took the stage after a few minutes of tuning up and nervously waited for Mick Jagger's memorial to the departed Stone Brian. Quietening down the huge and excited crowd, Jagger, wearing a wide patterned choker and a white half length over shirt with high ruffled neck and tied wrists, read two verses of Shelley's *Adonais* before releasing thousands of white butterflies into the London sky. Rather appropriately, he had dressed as Shelley himself may have done looking dandy in the old sense of the word. He looked every inch a rock god as he took the stage. Many of the poor butterflies quickly joined the departed Brian having been half suffocated in cardboard boxes but those that did actually manage to take off and fly provided a moving backdrop as the Stones launched into a ragged set. The resulting film directed by Jo Durden-Smith and Leslie Woodhead acts now as a fascinating period piece. London's Hyde Park tries in vain to carry on as normal as the park gradually fills to bursting with the freaks of the day.

It was Mick Taylor's first day on the job, and he can be seen constantly looking over at Mick and Keith for guidance as the Stones rambled and shambled their way through a set that opened with Johnny Winters' *I'm Yours She's Mine* and included *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, *Mercy Mercy*, *Midnight Rambler*, *Satisfaction*, *I'm Free*, *Street Fighting Man* and gave a first public airing to *Honky Tonk Women* and *Love in Vain*. For the finale, *Sympathy for the Devil*, the band are joined by a group of African dancers complete with a Voodoo Lounge style witch-doctor. Even that failed to ignite and a little over an hour after taking the stage, the Stones left. The one positive that came out of a relatively trouble free event was Mick Taylor's slide guitar on *No Expectations* and *Love in Vain*. For the first time he looked at ease and showed that he could lay down the Brian Jones parts without too much trouble. When the band ended with a ragged *Sympathy for the Devil* he was sat at the front of the stage by Mick Jagger as an introduction to the fans, a couple of which started to invade the stage. The younger Mick followed the advice of Jagger and retreated to the back of the stage where he stood looking bemused at just what it was like to be part of the biggest band in the world and all the craziness that surrounded it. At the very end, the camera captures a certain Paul McCartney tip-toeing his way through the crowd, most of whom don't appear to realise who was in their immediate presence.

The Stones, meanwhile, had an album up their collective sleeve which would go a long way in defining this period in their career. *Let It Bleed* was released that December, but not before Marianne Faithfull had collapsed, having overdosed while accompanying Mick on the set of *Ned Kelly*. The next day, Bill Wyman divorced his wife Diane and the court, reading out his real date of birth, exposed the fact that he was quite a bit older than originally suspected. The day after that, Brian Jones was laid to rest in his home town of Cheltenham. Keith and Anita were, at that time, busy celebrating the birth of son Marlon, and in November the band flew to the States to

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take *Let It Bleed* out on the road. They opened in Colorado and sold out the entire tour. It was filmed and later released under the banner *Gimme Shelter* – a film that fully captured the incredible highs and the disturbingly violent lows of a massive tour held at a time when the band were truly at their peak.

Let It Bleed is a rock classic, pure, or in this case, not so pure, and simple. The credits for the album reveal a band adapting to the absence and later departure of Brian, and the arrival of Mick Taylor, and include such luminaries as Leon Russell, Ry Cooder who had nearly been Jones's replacement, Bobby Keys, Al Kooper and various others. Brian's name appears on several tracks and the band treat us to a track list that must surely be impossible to upstage. Opening with *Gimme Shelter*, a classic that captures everything the Stones represented at that time, it takes on a sleazy ramble through *Love in Vain*, *Country Honk*, *Live With Me* a song that could sit quite comfortably on any much later Stones album, *Let It Bleed*, *Midnight Rambler*, *You Got the Silver*, *Monkey Man* and You Can't Always Get What You Want, an ironic title if you happened to be a Stone at that time. Having now had some time to properly prepare after Hyde Park, they took America by storm. It was be a tour overshadowed by the tragedy of the Altamont speedway concert, but also one that caught the band at their peak of performance and confirmed their billing as the greatest rock and roll band in the world. The film of the tour was billed by *Newsweek* as 'The most disturbing, powerful and inciteful moments to be recorded on film of the young generation raised on rock.' Yes, the film remains disturbing even after all this time. It is powerful – it is hard to imagine the Stones being anything else. It is that word 'inciteful' that really sticks in the throat. To look at the Stones part in the disaster that was Altamont, we first need to get the event into the context of its time. The story of the film is that the band, keen to end their hugely successful American tour on a high, wanted to put on a free concert in San Francisco, the city that had become the epicentre for everything that the sixties

represented. Woodstock, held in upstate New York a few months earlier had already passed into almost mythical status. The idea that the Woodstock generation could organise an event of that magnitude and have it pass off peacefully underlined everything that the sixties had come to represent. It is often overlooked, however, that four people died at Woodstock, although none of the deaths were violence related. Following on so closely from Woodstock, and of course their own successful Hyde Park concert, who could blame the Stones for wanting to try and repeat it? The choice of San Francisco was no coincidence. It was a city that had a well established, albeit recent, reputation for free events. The Grateful Dead would often appear in Golden Gate Park alongside other Frisco bands such as Jefferson Airplane. There had been deaths caused by genuine accidents, overdoses and falls from trees but there had never been any reported violence. The whole culture of such events was of peace and it was important for the so-called flower generation to send a powerful message of just how peaceful such gatherings and events could be. As a result, the authorities had little cause for concern apart from the logistical problems of such large numbers arriving in any particular place at one time. This concern, rather ironically, set off a chain of events that culminated in the violent scenes that became the enduring image of Altamont.

The first chosen venue was Golden Gate Park, and The Dead and Jefferson Airplane quickly agreed to appear as the early organisation of the concert was set in motion. Other bands invited along included Santana and Crosby, Stills & Nash, who had both been huge successes at Woodstock, and Gram Parson's Flying Burrito Brothers. When it was realised that the interest in this event threatened to overwhelm the city, the venue was moved to the outskirts and the Sears Point Raceway. This is where the legal wrangling took over and the subsequent film shot by David and Albert Maysles captures the behind-the-scenes problems of putting on a 'free' event. When a dispute erupted with the owners of the venue it was feared that the

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concert may have to be cancelled. The Stones were understandably determined to go ahead, and despite the lateness and the logistical problems of moving all the equipment to another location, the owner of the then disused Altamont race track, Dick Carter, offered the event a lifeline. Work went on throughout the nights of 4–5 December so that the event could go on. The Stones hadn't even seen the venue before they arrived. Unsurprisingly it was not the best venue and despite all the hard work by everyone concerned, it was also not particularly well set up. The stage was only a few feet high. There were inadequate medical facilities, lighting and security. There had been a long and reasonably successful recent history of using the local chapters of Hells Angels as security. These events had mainly passed off without incident and the Stones, fresh from the experience of Hyde Park where bikers had helped with security, believed that to hire the Angels would solve the problem of managing the estimated huge crowd. The Oakland chapter were the most prominent at the concert under the leadership of Ralph 'Sonny' Barger. It became apparent very quickly that the area in front of the stage was proving problematical. The Angels struggled to keep the area clear and decided to put a line of bikes to mark out the zone. This led to confrontation as bikes were pushed over and damaged, and the line ignored. The mood of the day became instantly apparent to the band when they arrived at the raceway by helicopter. As soon as Mick stepped onto the ground he was punched in the face. This incident seemed to set the scene for one of the worst days in rock history. As Santana took the stage, scuffles in the crowd became apparent, but when San Francisco's own Jefferson Airplane appeared, the situation spiralled to whole new danger levels. When fighting broke out yet again right in front of the stage, in the area being 'protected' by the Angels, Airplane singer Marty Balin made what could have been a serious error of judgement. As Grace Slick tried in vain to calm everyone down, Balin, seeing the Angels pounding someone with pool cues, challenged them verbally before jumping down to try

and sort the fight out. In the ensuing chaos he was knocked out in a situation that could have been far worse for him. When fellow band member Paul Kantner pointed out via a microphone what had happened, an Angel grabbed hold of Balin's now vacant mic stand and began arguing with him. For Airplane, famed for their whole peace and love philosophy, it was unknown territory. By the time the Grateful Dead arrived and were informed of what had happened and that the whole day had taken on a sinister atmosphere, Jerry Garcia took his band back to the city without performing. The Stones finally took to the stage after darkness. Watching the *Gimme Shelter* film it is horrific to see how many people were still on or near the stage. There was next to no protection for the band who could hardly move around the stage to perform. Scuffles started straight away with the Angels wading in with pool cues, while the Stones looked stunned as the chaos took over. The contrast between the stoned freaks and the boozed up Angels contributed to the confrontation, and when one Angel is seen picking up his knocked over bike the violence was clearly destined to escalate even further. During the rather apt *Sympathy for the Devil* Mick has to tell the band to stop playing as yet another fight kicks off right in front of him. He appealed to the crowd to 'cool out' before adding 'something very funny always happens when we start that number.' An amplifier then gets pulled into the crowd and the camera captures a naked girl trying to get up onto the stage before being carried away. Every man and his dog seemed free to crowd the stage, and this is confirmed when a lone hound walks across the stage right in front of Jagger. It is a study in collective madness and mania and how quickly a crowd's mood can become dangerous to the point of rioting. Even Keith, who normally remained unruffled, looks bemused and concerned. For Mick it must have seemed like a different planet altogether from Dartford or the London School of Economics. Before long, Mick makes another appeal to the crowd pleading with them and asking 'Why are we fighting?' Keith grabs the microphone saying, 'Either those cats cool

it man or we don't play' as another call for urgent medical help is put out. At this point, in an attempt to restore some calm the band start *Under My Thumb* but it was the last song ever heard by one of the crowd, an eighteen year old black male, Meredith Hunter. It is at this point that the film really captures the full horror of what happened. It cuts to show Mick watching in silence as Hunter is stabbed and clubbed to death directly in front where he had been singing.

At one point, the film is rewound in slow motion and clearly shows Hunter pointing a gun before graphically showing him stabbed in the neck. Whatever it was that he intended to do with the gun can never be known and died with him, but the Angels said that he had pointed it at the stage. Just like Woodstock, four people died during the event. Two more were killed by a hit and run accident and another drowned in a ditch, but there the similarity ends. Altamont, December 1969, is now almost always referred to as the day when the sixties died along with its dream. The Stones, being the ones who suggested the concert, have been subjected to years of blame but of course this is in hindsight. This was the Woodstock generation. Surely no one could possibly have foreseen that violence on this scale was going to happen. When the film shows Charlie and Mick listening to a radio phone, the shock on their faces is there for all to see. Charlie mumbles, 'Oh, what a shame', and looks totally bewildered as Sonny rages on air about what happens to people who knock down the Angels' bikes. When the dust settled many lessons were learned from the mistakes of Altamont. The film is not all doom and gloom, though, and contains some fascinating behind-the-scenes footage of the band listening to the first airing of *Wild Horses* and of checking into a Holiday Inn Hotel, Keith kicking in his door asking if his favourite groupie was in. It also captures the band on fire at New York City's Madison Square Garden earlier in the tour, during a concert later released on the live album *Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!*. Following on from Hyde Park, the band are tight and together with Mick Taylor looking far more relaxed and confident. The sixties

had come to an end in tragedy and triumph. Brian Jones had died, Altamont had taken its toll, but the Stones had become, justifiably, the greatest ever, albeit infamous, rock and roll band.

After the controversy of Altamont, Mick returned to London for another court appearance with Marianne Faithfull, where both received fines for possession of cannabis. They still found time to give two shows in London, demonstrating how tight they had become during the tour, and just how far the now-instinctive partnership between the guitars of Keith and Mick Taylor had developed. By the Stones' standards, 1970 proved somewhat quiet. As *Ned Kelly* premiered in June to good reviews, the Beatles were finally giving up any pretence of survival and had come to an end. By the end of July, the Stones' long-running deal with Decca had finished and seeing a huge commercial opportunity, Mick, Keith and their advisors set about pursuing a new deal. In September the live album from the America tour, *Get Yer Ya-Yas Out!* was released. It must rank as one of the greatest live albums ever, and went in at No. 1 in the charts, where it stayed unmoved for three months. Recorded in New York over two nights at the end of November and mixed by Glyn Johns, it is electrifying in every sense of the word. The cover itself is the stuff of rock legends. Shot by famed snapper David Bailey it shows Charlie Watts jumping in the air wearing Mick's famed stars and stripes hat. He is carrying two guitars while a donkey, wearing Charlie's usual expression, carries Charlie's drum kit and another guitar. Opening with *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, this live album captures Mick's chat with the audience and all the highlights you would expect from that US tour. It would be their last release on Decca and it gave the label a huge seller before they resigned themselves to losing their biggest act. The guitar interplay is extraordinarily good, giving the band an extra edge as if they needed one.

While the album topped the charts, Mick was almost continually in the papers as his relationship with Bianca Perez Morena de Marcia from Nicaragua became public. The film *Gimme Shelter* was released

in time for Christmas, but made particularly unpleasant viewing as the full horrors of Altamont became apparent for the first time to their home-based fans. A further brief UK tour opened 1971 as Mick's film *Performance* finally got its certificate and came out amid 'shocked' and 'outraged' reviews. Once the tour was out of the way, the band acting on taxation advice quit the UK in favour of France. Mick and Bianca settled near to fashionable St. Tropez whilst Bill rented a spread in Grasse up in the hills of Provence. Keith, Anita and Marlon could be found in Nellcote, a beautiful villa overlooking the harbour of Villefranche on the Riviera near Cap Ferrat. Even new Stone Mick Taylor felt the pinch of British tax laws and moved over to Grasse. The band's absence made little difference to sales of the next Stones single *Brown Sugar* backed by *Bitch*, which came out in April, going straight to No. 1. This was followed by *Sticky Fingers* – the first complete album with Mick Taylor on board. By June, the Stones topped both the album and the singles chart.

Fortunately, Keith was still able to enjoy this achievement despite his continued heroin use, and another near-fatal car accident during which he smashed his pink Lena and legged it from the scene. He again faced court charges and a possible jail sentence, so his purchase of a new E-Type Jaguar could have been seen as hasty and impetuous. By this time, Mick had married Bianca (now pregnant) in St. Tropez. It was a marriage that opened all sorts of social doors for him as Bianca introduced her rock star husband to the world's glitterati. *Sticky Fingers* was released with a controversial Andy Warhol cover complete with a real fly zip, and was another quality album from the Stones. Opening with the Stones classic *Brown Sugar* it paved the way for much of the material that later appeared on the sprawling *Exile on Main Street* revealing the rich vein of creativity the band had begun to tap into so long ago. The legal wrangles with Allen Klein continued, and to the band's horror it became apparent that they had somehow signed over all the rights to their entire catalogue from 1963 right up to and including *Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!*. Cynics began

saying that the Stones only continued beyond that point to recoup the lost wealth. When it was pointed out to them that the deal required one more single before they could be released, the band sent a tape of *Cocksucker Blues* that they knew was unmarketable. *Sticky Fingers* helped push the Stones onward and into the seventies with a swaggering confidence and belief in their own legend. Including such classics as *Sister Morphine* and *Wild Horses* this album is another must-have in a staggering collection that represents the Stones catalogue over a, now, forty year span.

On 21 October the newly married Jaggers became proud parents of a daughter, whom they named Jade, and as the band reconvened for sessions towards another studio album, Mick and Bianca went off to California to look for a house. Keith was in trouble with the authorities yet again, this time near his home in the south of France. It was a place that Keith and Anita, pregnant with her second child, loved, and it provide young Marlon with a beautiful location in which to grow up. It was also within easy scope of the Marseille heroin dealers. However, the bliss was somewhat shattered when Keith, who had been to see Errol Flynn's old yacht, was bumped by a tourist who dented his E-type. Keith lost his head and produced a switchblade, and then pulled out Marlon's toy pistol from the Jaguar, whereupon he was arrested by the local Gendarmerie. This didn't keep him down, however, and once work commenced on the new project it was Keith that put all his energy into this one.

The single from the album *Exile on Main Street*, *Tumbling Dice*, was released in February 1972 and gave the band another subtle direction change. The album cover remains one of the most iconic images of the Stones' career. Having left Decca, they were now totally in control of not only what was released, but how and in what. The *Exile* cover is a huge gatefold, in the days of vinyl, containing numerous black and white shots of the band on the rear, but on the front were some incredible images from the camera of the legendary Robert Franck that remain fascinating even today. Inside, the loyal

Stones fan was rewarded with a set of postcards that most people immediately started sending around the globe. A full set now is quite a collector's item. The album itself is a sprawling, double set that critics initially felt was self-indulgent and overblown. Subsequently, it was said to be the greatest ever Stones album and one of rock's all time greats. This masks the often ramshackle way the album came about. It was recorded during a time when Mick and Keith's personal lives were nowhere near connecting; Mick was busy enjoying his new-found socialite high-life while Keith was surrounded, in the South of France, by some typically dubious Keith associates. When the band met at Keith's villa to record tracks for the album, they found that the ancient French electricity supply wasn't up to it and so many of the tracks were recorded or drawn from sessions in the old familiar Olympic Studios. Several more were drawn from recordings at Mick's English country house Stargroves. The sessions were disjointed. Drug use was at its highest with Keith struggling to find any cohesion at all. Bill Wyman was absent because he did not like recording in the villa nor the overt drug use going on there, and is credited on only eight tracks with much of the bass being shared between Keith and Mick Taylor. In effect, the extended core of the band for the two locations now consisted of Mick Jagger, Mick Taylor, Keith, Charlie Keys, Bobby Keys and Jimmy Miller, who filled in for Charlie on a couple of tracks. Other notables who called in and became involved included the ill-fated Gram Parsons who was succumbing to heroin, the ever-loyal Ian Stewart and Nicky Hopkins, Al Perkins, Billy Preston and Dr. John. There was a constant stream of suppliers and the house was awash with drugs. The second phase took place in California with Mick Jagger taking a more hands-on approach. Despite it being a more expensive double album split into rock and acoustic sides, and being heavily criticised for being uncoordinated, it sold well and hit the top spot on both sides of the Atlantic when it was finally released in May 1972. Immediately after it went to press and realising the extent to which his heroin addiction had developed,

Keith checked into a detoxification facility in Switzerland. Anita provided Keith with more inspiration to tackle his addiction by giving birth to daughter Dandelion, in Switzerland. Soon after, the family left southern France and moved to Montreux on the banks of Lake Geneva.

In November 1972 the Stones reconvened, this time in Jamaica, to start the whole process off again for a new album. But while they were there, a huge earthquake hit Bianca's homeland of Nicaragua and Mick left to help her surviving family. The album was finally mixed in California early the following year and appeared as *Goats Head Soup* when it was finally released in August 1973. All of the band members but Keith, who had an outstanding warrant against him in France, got together in Nice. What was intended as a get-together to clear up any differences between them dissolved into chaos as the French authorities made it clear that the band, despite not being directly involved in the charges of drug dealing levied against Keith, were not welcome. Meanwhile, Keith had set his family up in a property in Jamaica, where he quickly fell in love with the free and easy lifestyle of Rastafarianism. This provoked an interest in reggae that surfaced on many future Stones records. However when a rock journalist from the UK's *Melody Maker* visited Keith there, he found him to be terribly thin and dangerously ill. The Stones embarked on another tour, though it was a bit disjointed, having been banned from both Australia and Japan because of past drug arrests, they played some dates in Hawaii before moving onto New Zealand. Later on, they were finally allowed to play Australia, but were forced to undergo intimate body searches before they were even allowed into the country. When the tour was over, Keith went back to Jamaica, but when he arrived, he found that Anita had taken up with some of local Rasta community. Once again feeling like he had been publicly humiliated by Anita, he left for London. Soon afterwards, Anita found herself locked up in a Jamaican cell on a drug bust and, according to her, was being subjected to repeated

beatings and even rape by fellow inmates and guards. When she was finally let out, she made straight for Keith and London and their old home in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. This quickly became a bumpy ride, however, and while back in his old haunt, Keith was arrested again on possession of cannabis, along with a firearm. The pair then decided to go down to Redlands in Sussex, but had only been there a short while when the house caught fire and burnt down. The thatched roof went up quickly and the house was totally destroyed needing many years of rebuilding work before they could use it again.

More trouble followed when it emerged that even the once innocent Mick Taylor was now deeply into heroin and during an autumn European tour the press widely reported the imminent demise of Keith Richards having seen how terrible he looked. The band's performances suffered on the tour and Keith only managed some straight rhythm guitar, and he continually forgot the words to his vocal spot on *Happy*. He was clearly in need of help, and fast, or otherwise he might soon become the latest rock tragedy. When the Rolling Stones played Manchester in September 1973, Keith heard of the drug-related death of old friend Gram Parsons. He went on stage and gave a full on performance for the first time in a while. Shortly after that he returned to Switzerland where he underwent treatment on his blood to filter the heroin from his system. More heroin problems emerged when Bobby Keys collapsed and nearly died, leaving the Stones high and dry before a gig in Germany. He was sacked. As the tour came to an end the band played what proved to be Mick Taylor's last Stones concert in Berlin. The French court case was finally heard and Keith and Anita were banned from French soil for two years. The London case was also heard, and they both received a fine rather than the much-anticipated jail sentence. Celebrating this outcome at a London hotel, Keith fell asleep and set fire to his bed. In amongst all this drama, the single the ballad *Angie* charted in second position and *Goats Head Soup* hit No. 1. The cover photograph was once again taken by Mick's old time friend David

Bailey and included a colour insert of a goat in soup (just in case you missed the point). More mellow in delivery, it still managed to court controversy with the inclusion of *Star Star* also known as *Starfucker* and the political *Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo (Heartbreaker)* – a track written around the shooting of a ten-year-old in America mistaken as a bank robber. The opener *Dancing With Mr. D* is a clear reference to death. Its darker side can be seen as somewhat reflective of just how life as the Stones had caught up with Keith, Mick Taylor and several others of the extended Stones family. Just as the Stones were slipping from public view, *Angie* gave them more airplay than they could possibly have hoped for, bringing the band firmly back into the spotlight.

During this period, Keith had met and become friends with Faces guitarist Ron Wood, and had begun regularly visiting his Richmond home. At one point, it looked increasingly likely that Ron would replace Keith to allow him space to beat his drug problems. In the end the two struck a powerful partnership and understanding on both a musical and a personal level. Ron was impossible not to get on with and the similarities between the two were striking. Both were party animals and they quickly became firm friends.

When work on *It's Only Rock 'n Roll* began in Munich in November 1973, Mick Taylor's position in the band was under threat. It was seven months before they were in a position to perform the album's title track, released as a single, on *The Old Grey Whistle Test*. It peaked at a disappointing No. 10 despite remaining one of the band's most enduring songs. In spite of this relative drop in fortunes, it did provide massive airplay and was the very definition of radio friendly. Taken as a whole, the album is a mix of styles and inspirations typical of a band in a period of transition. There is a little hint of reggae, a little soul, plenty of rock, some lovely ballads and a helping of pop as the various themes are explored. The result is another positive album, albeit one lacking in any real continuity despite still containing some superb highs such as *Time Waits for*

No-One. But now Taylor's growing dissatisfaction reached new heights when he saw that he had not been correctly credited with his contributions on the album. This, combined with the lack of touring, his own battles with drugs, the feeling that he had never really been accepted by the rest of the band, and the miserable (according to him) experience working with Keith led to Mick Taylor's wanting to quit the band. He had already hatched plans to form a new band with Jack Bruce of Cream fame and by November 1974 he had reached his breaking point. First, he rang the Stones office to say that he had quit but it wasn't taken seriously. He finally quit by handing a letter to Mick after an Eric Clapton concert. Later that same evening Mick asked Ron Wood to fill in but Ron remained loyal to his band the Faces. The Stones were due back in the studio in a few days and they now found themselves without a lead guitarist. Keith was furious at Taylor's timing and was famously quoted as saying 'No one leaves this band except in a pine box.' Within the week the band went into the studios to start work on another album, *Black and Blue*, and the press got hold of Mick Taylor's departure through a series of statements. The band entered another stage in their odyssey as the search for a replacement was underway. Irish guitar genius Rory Gallagher was mentioned along with Eric Clapton and Peter Frampton but nothing really moved and the band drifted for a while as the new album took shape. When Keith hooked up with Wayne Perkins, whose slide guitar had impressed him so much, it looked as though the Stones had finally found a replacement but it wasn't to be. Just as Perkins was doing a great job playing slide on *Fool to Cry* Keith was losing interest and wanted to go in a different direction. Jeff Beck arrived but his stay proved short-lived and despite playing on some unreleased tracks he moved on. Harvey Mandel then joined the sessions working on *Memory Motel* before he too departed.

In March 1975 Mick called Ron Wood, asking him to get over to Munich to help out, and the Stones' future was set in motion. It was a turbulent time for Ron as Chrissie, his wife, had gone off

with Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page, so he jumped at the chance. The band knew instinctively that the new partnership would work out, and the immediacy of the sound that Keith and Ron created simply underlined this. The new boy, as Ron Wood has been referred to for the last thirty years, fitted in straight away. Hired originally just for the forthcoming tour, Ron somehow stayed, and when Rod Stewart left the Faces behind to pursue his own solo career there was nothing to really go back to. He also provided the perfect foil in between the Glimmer Twins, Keith and Mick, with his infectious humour. As the Stones entered the Ron Wood era, many thought that their days were finally numbered. The media was awash with speculation about how long the band could actually continue. Those clamouring for what was genuinely believed to the last Stones tour were desperate to catch the Stones one last time before the inevitable break-up. How wrong we all were.

CHAPTER THREE

MOUNTAINS

The 1975 Tour of the Americas, the first Stones trip with Ron Wood on board, comprised forty-seven sold-out shows criss-crossing the States and back several times over. Ron found himself in even greater demand by seeing out his last few gigs on a simultaneous Faces schedule that had him jetting off and returning in time for the next Stones show. The stage sets for this tour now reflected some of the professionalism surrounding major rock events such as this, proving that a lot of water had passed under the bridge since the Altamont fiasco several years earlier. The Hells Angels, however, had not forgotten their sense of injustice, having shouldered most of the blame for the violence and issued threats to the band, in particular Mick, whom they had not forgiven for failing to speak up on their behalf after

it had all gone wrong. For the tour they had hired a second drummer, Ollie Brown, with the intention of releasing Charlie to enable him to play in a more relaxed and jazzier style. The set contained all the favourites, as there was no real new material, opening with *Honky Tonk Women*. Keith's memorable rendition of *Happy* proved to be something of a surprising highlight and gave Ron the perfect chance to show exactly what he could do when he launched into a stunning slide section. Billy Preston once again added a welcome dimension as the Stones cranked it up for the best part of three hours.

Opening for the Stones were acts such as the Eagles, the Outlaws and Little Feat, depending on the venue, which added even more gravitas to the occasion. Travel between venues had also come a long way as the Stones enjoyed the delights of 'The Starship', a Boeing 720 passenger plane, fully equipped with whatever delights the band required. Keith and Ron hit it off, sharing great guitar licks along with a legendary consumption of heroin. Ron's arrival seemed to kick-start the band and ignite the stage performances once again. Ron is, after all, one of rock's great characters and joining with the Glimmer Twins helped take the band into a whole new dimension just when people began to fear they would run out of steam.

If Ron thought for just one crazy moment that becoming a Rolling Stone would prove to be an anticlimax, he only had to wait a few weeks to realise that this was going to be quite a trip. On 5 July while being driven by Keith in a limo from Memphis towards Dallas for the next concert, they were stopped by police. The cop's attention was no doubt drawn by the fact that the car was swerving all over the road as Keith was trying to tune the radio, and Keith was subsequently arrested for possessing a knife.

Ron was officially announced as a member of the Stones on 28 February 1976 during a press conference in New York City. The London police were one step ahead, and in true Stones tradition they raided Ron's Richmond home. He was away at the time, but his wife

Chrissie was there in bed with a girlfriend. The resulting publicity merely confirmed his arrival as a real Stone. Shortly afterward, Anita, now back in Switzerland, had Keith's third child, Tara. A month later *Black and Blue* was released, complete with a shaven Charlie Watts and new boy Ron Wood on the cover. Continuing where the last album left off, this one is once again a mixture of styles and influences. The album's single, *Fool to Cry*, reached No. 4 in the UK charts and provided them with huge quantities of airplay. *Black and Blue* was generally well received and soared up to the No. 2 position amid favourable reviews. As the British tour, in support of the album, was starting with a date in Glasgow, Keith was back in the headlines, this time for crashing his Bentley near his Sussex house of Redlands. Fortunately, the Richards family was uninjured, but the police who attended the scene of the crash found some illegal substances, landing Keith back in custody. This paled into total insignificance just a month later, when a terrible tragedy hit Keith and Anita. Their son Tara, less than three months old, died suddenly from a virus. Keith, who was about to go onstage when the news was broken to him, played on regardless but the tragedy was hard to bear and the remainder of the tour proved difficult and almost pointless by comparison. A highlight came in August that year when they headlined the Knebworth Festival, appearing in front of a quarter of a million fans. When Keith's latest misdemeanours were heard at Aylesbury Crown Court he once again managed to dodge jail and received a large fine and paid the court costs. This latest brush with the law didn't seem to slow him down and the very next month both he and Anita were arrested for possession of heroin following a search at Toronto Airport. Further controversy arrived when a party held by Margaret, the wife of Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, resulted in speculation that events went quite a bit further than that expected of one held by a top politician's wife. For a while, Mick's name was being linked to her as the Trudeau's marriage suffered. By May, Keith's addiction had once again reached such proportions that

his imminent death was being widely predicted and he was unable to appear before the Toronto court to answer his latest charge. When the Stones album *Love You Live* was released at London's Marquee Club where it had all started a lifetime or two ago, Keith was too ill to attend.

In November 1977, Mick was again in the headlines when he was seen with model Jerry Hall in Morocco and the press had a further field day when Bianca finally started divorce proceedings against him. Meanwhile, the band went back into the studio to work on another album, *Some Girls*, the recording of which ended in the March. Not only was the press full of coverage of Bianca's divorce petition, but Ron Wood's marriage had finally fallen apart too as he moved in with his soon-to-be-wife, model Jo Howard. The album's single, *Miss You*, proved that the Stones still had what it took to do well in the charts as it reached No. 2. This album was full of the Stone's latest directions such as dance, club and disco which (though the combination might sound terrible on paper) ranks as yet another return to form during an era that is considered rather tame by their standards. As always, the Stones couldn't release the album without some kind of controversy; this time it was the cover that caused problems. It showed various celebrities in wigs which worked fine until some of them, namely Lucille Ball and Raquel Welch, demanded either image rights or for their faces to be removed. Despite the cover setback, *Miss You* proved huge in America and gave them their first No. 1 there for seven years. *When the Whip Comes Down* is tough and totally appropriate for the time the album was released. The title track was catchy, memorable and was the Stones on top form. *Faraway Eyes* is back to a country feel while the soul–searching, Keith-penned track Before They Make Me Run had the wild man of rock in a reflective mood as he struggled to free himself from heroin before it killed him. Other highlights include *Respectable*, *Shattered* and *Imagination*. It is a remarkably strong album from a band with no real reason to remain driven, except

for the fact that they had always managed to be exactly that. Also included is the fantastic eight-minute-long *Beast of Burden* delivered in an almost Motown style. The album shifted copies at an impressive rate and within very little time, eight million of them had made this the best selling Stones album of their amazing career. By the end of 1978, Rolling Stone magazine voted *Some Girls* as their Best Album and the Stones as the Band of the Year. It had been another incredible twelve months for the band. However it had also been the year that included the death of their long-time friend Keith Moon. Charlie and Bill attended the funeral on behalf of the Stones.

The following year proved somewhat quieter. The band only did one live appearance in Toronto to fulfil some of Keith's promises to the court, and as Mick and Bianca's divorce was threatening to become one of the biggest and most expensive ever heard of, the band reconvened for some studio work. As the Stones were strangely quiet, Keith and Ron went on the road with a band they called the New Barbarians together with ex-Faces keyboard player Ian McLagan, Stanley Clarke on bass and Bobby Keys. Zigaboo Modeliste filled the drum seat. When the band rehearsed in Los Angeles comedian John Belushi was almost ever present. A quick tour was undertaken and sold out all of its venues. The recordings are ragged but fun, and are never dull with Keith reportedly getting through a quart of vodka on stage every night. His physical appearance also began to change dramatically and his hair went grey. And as the band's drug consumption rose to near lethal levels, Keith's slump back into addiction again had the Stones mentioned in the papers whose reporters seemed to eager to report the next rock death.

Many feared that *Some Girls* would be too hard an act to follow and the sessions and writing for *Emotional Rescue* tended to prove just that as the process drifted on for many months. Just as the Jaggers' divorce drifted from the front pages, a teenager who was staying with Anita in New York State got hold of a revolver and shot himself. Stories of a game of Russian roulette gone horribly wrong

filled the columns, but more likely is that he had picked up the gun and simply did not realise it was actually loaded. Anita was cleared of any involvement, but was charged with unlawful possession of firearms, and the entire incident can be chalked up as another bizarre incident in the life of the Stones. The Jaggers' marriage finally came to an end in November 1979 just as Keith's relationship with Anita also fell apart. He was seen in company with American model Patti Hanson, and the press was full of articles imploring her not to get involved with him despite his attempts to get clean. In June 1980, the Stones topped the charts with the title single from *Emotional Rescue*, proving that the Stones were not going to lie down just yet. The album was released as stories of Ron's addiction to freebase were hitting the press, Keith began sporting a death's head skull ring, and Bill was threatening to quit the band. As the eighties began, rumours predicting the demise of the band began to circulate again, and stories of another fall out between Mick and Keith were widely reported. The single *Emotional Rescue* sold well, but the relative failure of the follow up *She's So Cold* had the doubters predicting the end once more. As Mick's hugely expensive divorce settlement was announced, the press combined this with the ongoing legal wrangling over the rights to all the Decca material that had been signed over years before, and cited these as reasons for the band not continuing at all. *Emotional Rescue* was certainly not up there with classic Stones albums of old, but it was a well produced album of its time containing a whole range of styles. Following on from his successful reappearance with the New Barbarians, Bobby Keys was allowed back into the Stones' fold and can be heard to good effect on the opener *Dance*. *Let Me Go* features some classic pedal steel guitar. *Summer Romance* is weak as is *Send It to Me* which continued their pursuit of reggae and is really quite awful. Next up is *Indian Girl*, which is classic Stones from an era that appears lost by the evidence on the album so far. *Down in the Hole* is altogether better, slow and sleazy it works well, but all in all, the album represents an inevitable

slump in their fortunes and can almost be described as forgettable, redeemed only slightly by Keith's cutting goodbye ode to Anita with *All About You*. The year ended tragically with John Lennon's assassination in New York. This news hit the band hard, and the shock waves resulted in Mick hiring armed guards and Keith being almost justified in his carrying of various firearms over the years.

In June 1981, Bill Wyman's successful single *Je Suis un Rock Star* further fuelled a split in the band, but in truth they were back in the studio to work through tracks for another album *Tattoo You*. The single release *Start Me Up* not only became a regular concert opener from that point but also managed to sell over a million in its first week in America. As the inevitable tour of the States started, Bill was busy celebrating his forty-fifth birthday, made sweeter by the fact that by the time the tour finished, the band had taken a staggering fifty million dollars. *Tattoo You* was thankfully a return to form and gave the band another award for album and band of the year by their namesake magazine. While the new album was well received, it actually consisted of some older tracks. Waiting on a Friend, for example, dated back to 1972 while *Worried About You* was a reworking of a song written two years later. The band hit the home road once again touring the UK and sold out every venue. Once the tour had finished, a live album of recordings from American concerts was released under the banner *Still Life* and contained a typical cross section of the Stones catalogue such as *Satisfaction*, *Under My Thumb*, *Let's Spend the Night Together* sitting alongside the very new *Start Me Up*. The result tends to prove that somewhere along the journey the Stones had lost some of their power. Shortly afterwards, Keith's beloved Redlands, the scene of a previous devastating fire, once again burned down. Over sixty fire-fighters tried in vain to save the house, and even though the damage wasn't quite as extensive as the previous time he had to restart the whole process of getting it restored to its former glory. Some of the pain was extinguished when, during the following September, the Stones signed a huge twenty-

eight million dollar contract with CBS. The next album *Undercover* was released in October 1983 with the single *Undercover of the Night* receiving a lot of airplay, especially after the accompanying video was banned. *Undercover* explored the familiar themes and styles, but tended to misfire even though when played now, in hindsight, it has actually worn quite well. However, tracks such as Keith's *Wanna Hold You* along with *Feel On Baby* and *Too Much Blood* are really quite poor and many more fans became increasingly disillusioned as a direct result of what was being produced during this phase in the Stones' odyssey. There just seemed to be too much going on elsewhere and too many differences within the band to allow them to come up with anything really co-ordinated. *Too Tough* is possibly the nearest they get. While Keith married Patti Hanson, the Mick inspired single *She Was Hot* was getting ready for release. When it finally came out in January 1984, it barely scraped in at No. 40.

The year proved to be a near non-event as far as the Stones were concerned as each member pursued their own lives. Mick and Jerry had a daughter, Elizabeth, while the new father released a solo album and Bill busied himself in work away from the band. When 1985 arrived, it seemed that the Stones had finally run out of steam, and this view was further underlined when Mick's solo career seemed to be the only new material on offer, including a successful duet with David Bowie on *Dancing in the Street*. The year ended on a sad note when long time Stone, the forgotten man of the band dating back to the heady days of Andrew Loog Oldham's management, Ian Stewart, collapsed and died of a heart attack. He was forty-seven. The whole band attended his funeral; such was their respect and gratitude to the man who had been happy to take a position out of the limelight, but whose contribution had been huge all the same. He had, after all, always been a Rolling Stone. In March 1986, another single *Harlem Shuffle* restored the band to number seven position in the UK charts and the new album *Dirty Work* sold so well that it took them back to No. 3 in the album listings. In reality it was a

Stones album by name only. It was largely the work of Keith, who had become fed up while waiting for Mick who was pursuing his solo career. It was dedicated to Ian Stewart and ended with a lovely honky tonk piano recording of the man himself. Highlights included the tracks *Had It With You* and Keith's pointed message to Mick inspired by all their recent troubles, *Sleep Tonight*. In January 1987, the latest Stones-related drug arrest, for once, did not involve Keith, as Jerry Hall was detained on suspicion of importing cannabis at the airport in Barbados. Actually, it was the only event in the whole year as the band drifted apart. The differences between the Glimmer Twins had Keith signing a solo deal with Virgin Records and Mick releasing a solo album that contained some references to his fellow Glimmer Twin. When the band finally met up again in May 1988, they hadn't been in the same room for two years. Keith, during that time, released the impressive solo album *Talk Is Cheap*, just as his Jamaica home was hit by a hurricane, and before taking his new band X-Pensive Winos out for a brief tour.

In January 1989, the Rolling Stones were finally inducted into the rock and roll hall of fame. Ex-guitarist Mick Taylor attended as a sign that time had healed old wounds on both sides of the street. The Stones were back in the press again in March when Bill announced his engagement to Mandy Smith, a teenage model. When the pair finally married, Mick gave them a precious Picasso drawing as a present. When the next album, the more impressive, *Steel Wheels* was released it came with a huge deal in respect of merchandise to take the band back on the road. The tour was massive even by Stones standards and earned the band a colossal amount of money. The single *Mixed Emotions* sold well and by the time they embarked on the *Urban Jungle* leg of the tour in Europe, they had managed to sell all one-hundred-and-twenty thousand tickets for dates at Wembley within hours of their release. Among many highlights *Steel Wheels* includes *Terrifying*, *Rock and a Hard Place* and the mournful *Almost Hear You Sigh*. It wraps up with Keith's *Slipping Away*. It was a

stronger set, and when another in-form album, *Voodoo Lounge*, came out in July 1990, it signalled a period of high activity for the band who had clearly buried whatever collective hatchets they had and taken their own legend back out, dusted it down and delivered performances and music that once again rocked the world. *Voodoo Lounge* kicks off with *Love Is Strong*, *You Got Me Rocking* and *Sparks Will Fly* before Keith comes in with the wonderfully personal *The Worst*. *New Faces* almost harks back to the classic Brian Jones era of many years before, while other highlights include the superb ballads *Out of Tears* and *Blinded by Rainbows*, the rocking *I Go Wild*, the smaltzy *Sweethearts Together* and *Thru and Thru*. The album ends with Keith singing *Mean Disposition* straight from the heart. A further live album, *Flashpoint*, catches the moment with a revitalised Stones picking material from a staggeringly epic career. When they signed with Virgin in 1991 it was for a phenomenal amount of money. 1992 saw Bill and Mandy's short and controversial marriage end in the divorce court and he followed this by finally taking the plunge and leaving the Stones in January 1994, being replaced by Darryl Jones. Bill, the oldest Stone, had been a mainstay throughout their entire career. Only Mick, Keith and Charlie remained now from the original blues-playing Stones, who were now well into their thirtieth year. Brian Jones had been gone for twenty-six years by this point a fact that really underlines the longevity of the band. *Bridges to Babylon* was the next Stones album and when the band took that particular show on the road, they grossed a mind-boggling eighty-seven million dollars. *Bridges to Babylon* ended a trio of strong albums and underlined the band's ability to carry on in the face of changing times, trends and personnel. *Anybody Seen My Baby* is a modern Stones highlight, as is *Low Down*. The wonderful *Already Over Me* says everything about a failing relationship and *Saint of Me* is another great Stones moment. Reggae comes through on *You Don't Have to Mean It* while the distorted vibe of *Might as Well Get Juiced* works well before giving way for another superb ballad *Always*

Suffering. The rocking *Too Tight*, the slow down Keith track *Thief in the Night* and the chilled *How Can I Stop* close a highly memorable set. The Virgin deal was fortunate timing as the following month Mick and Jerry's marriage was on the rocks and he was potentially facing another massive divorce settlement should the couple decided to part. Mick's journey from Dartford was complete when he was invited back as their most famous son to open an arts-college named after him.

In an announcement that must rank as one of the biggest turnarounds of all time Mick Jagger, at one time the epitome of everything anti-establishment, was knighted. It brought some typically outspoken comments from Keith who was, for some reason, not invited. If anyone still doubted that the Stones could, even at their advancing age, still perform at the highest level, all they have to do is listen to the releases such as *Four Live Licks* and *Four Flicks*, released on DVD, to see those doubts disappear. Massive world tour followed world tour and every venue was oversubscribed as fans clambered for another 'last' chance to see the legend that is the Rolling Stones. Charlie, meanwhile, was receiving treatment for throat cancer and was facing a period of rehabilitation following an operation. Meanwhile Keith's death-defying romp through rock's history nearly came to a tragic end following an accident when he fell out of a tree while on holiday in Fiji. Of course it brought the predictable response from a press that easily made the connection with man who had seemingly spent most of his life out of his tree but it turned out to be far more serious and nearly proved to be his undoing. Despite trying to play down the incident, Keith had, in fact, suffered a serious head injury and his condition caused quite a bit of concern. Suddenly the press became more sympathetic and respectful as they realised that Keith Richards was indeed a rare commodity, a living, surviving rock and roll legend, and therefore should be treasured as such. He has defied all the odds and somehow, totally against those odds, has survived. In a retake of the Stones'

most famous track, the press developed a sympathy for the old devil. Johnny Depp's portrayal of Captain Jack Sparrow in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series whom Depp claims he has partly based on Keith, further immortalises the legend that is Keith Richards, bringing him to the attention of a younger generation. The Stones even went on to produce yet another album – *A Bigger Bang* was released on 6 September 2005 to much acclaim and impressive sales. *A Bigger Bang* was the Stones' twenty-second studio album, and their first in almost eight years.

During the subsequent promotional tour Martin Scorsese filmed the Stones performances at New York City's Beacon Theatre on 29 October and 1 November 2006 for the documentary film, *Shine a Light*. This was released in 2008, along with the accompanying soundtrack, also titled *Shine a Light*, which reached No. 2 in the UK and No. 11 in the US. The album's debut at No. 2 on the UK charts was the highest position for a Rolling Stones concert album since *Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!* was released in 1970. At the conclusion of the tour, the band had grossed a record-setting $558 million and were listed in the latest edition of *Guinness World Records*.

During the autumn of 2008, Jagger and Richards worked with producer Don Was to add new vocals and guitar parts to ten unfinished songs from the *Exile on Main Street* sessions. On 17 April 2010, the band released a limited edition 7-inch vinyl single of the previously unreleased track *Plundered My Soul*, and the track was combined with *All Down the Line* as its B-side.

The band then appeared together at the Cannes Festival for the premiere of the documentary about the recording of the album *Exile on Main Street – Stones in Exile*, directed by Stephen Kijak. On 23 May, the re-issue of Exile on Main St. reached No. 1 on the UK charts, which meant that it had been an incredible thirty-eight years to the week after it first occupied that position.

The Stones continued the success of *Stones in Exile* with a further two cinematic releases – *Ladies and Gentlemen: The Rolling Stones*

(a digitally remastered version of their 1974 release) and *The Rolling Stones: Some Girls Live In Texas '78*

The Rolling Stones celebrated their 50th anniversary in the summer of 2012 by releasing the book *The Rolling Stones: 50* and the documentary *Crossfire Hurricane*, directed by Brett Morgen, was released in October 2012. He conducted approximately fifty hours of interviews for the film, including extensive interviews with Wyman and Taylor, and it truly is an exhaustive look at the history of the Stones. Detailed and insightful, it makes for great viewing.

On 12 November the Stones released a new compilation album, *GRRR!*, which was made available in four different formats, and included two new tracks, *Doom and Gloom* and *One More Shot*. Despite their advancing age the Stones then launched their 50 & Counting... Tour and incredibly, have been gigging consistently ever since. These gigs have resulted in the live album, *Hyde Park Live* (released in July 2013) and the DVDs *Sweet Summer Sun: Live in Hyde Park* and *Olé Olé Olé: A Trip Across Latin America*.

Since then the Stones have released a further two albums, the first of which was *Blue & Lonesome* which came out on 2 December 2016. The album consisted of twelve blues covers of artists such as Howlin' Wolf, Jimmy Reed and Little Walter, and made it to No. 1 in the UK charts. Next came *On Air*, a collection of eighteen recordings the band performed on the BBC between 1963–1965. The compilation featured eight songs the band had never recorded or released commercially, and was released in December 2017.

Despite various health complaints within the band, the Rolling Stones are seemingly indefatigable and had dates for their No Filter Tour planned as recently as March 2020. Sadly these were postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, but the band did perform as part of *Global Citizen's One World: Together at Home* on-line and on-screen concert on 18 April 2020. This was a global event featuring dozens of artists and comedians to support frontline healthcare workers and the World Health Organisation.

On 23 April the Stones released *Living in a Ghost Town*, a brand new song recorded in LA and London in 2019 and finished in isolation, which made it their first original single since 2012.

This is just further evidence that neither time, nor indeed a global crisis can stop the Stones.

They truly are a legend and have been for nearly sixty incredible years. Despite attempts, there has never been another band that has created a bigger bang in the world of music. Though contenders to the throne have all come and gone, the Stones have remained, in all their satanic glory, the greatest rock and roll band in the world.

THE ROLLING STONES

MUSIC LEGENDS